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WEEKEND JOURNAL.

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A Cultural Revival

The spirit of Japan's Ainu artists

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This page (clockwise from left): Ainu embroidery artist Shizue Ukaji (Jun Takagi for The Wall Street Journal); Shanghai nightspot Chinatown (Chad Ingraham for The Wall Street Journal); a scene from 'Shui Yuet Sun Tau' or 'Echoes of the Rainbow' (Berlin International Film Festival)

WEEKEND JOURNAL
ASIA

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THE DISH: Budae jjigae

Uijeongbu's army-base stew *By Geoffrey Cain*

'When we made this dish, we didn't expect Spam to become so sought-after in Korea," jokes Kim Young-chun, a 39-year-old chef.

He's talking about *budae jjigae*, an eclectic stew created more than 50 years ago in his hometown of Uijeongbu, just north of Seoul. The one-dish meal boasts a hot stinging broth, flavored with spicy red-pepper paste, beef bones and kimchi, and is topped with an assortment of vegetables and meats, including—yes—Spam, the American brand of pre-cooked pork-and-ham loaf in a can, or another brand of canned chopped pork.

During the Korean War, Uijeongbu, then a poor village, was (as it still is) home to several U.S. and South Korean army bases. When food became scarce, locals pounced on Spam and hot dogs, staples of U.S. Army rations that had found their way onto the black market after American soldiers gave away their leftover rations to locals.

"Koreans were looking for ways to prepare Spam and hot dogs in a tasteful way," says the chef Mr. Kim, who manages the popular Hyoeng Jae restaurant in Uijeongbu. So they threw the meats into the recipe they knew best—*jjigae,* a common Korean stew—and coined the new soup budae jjigae, meaning "army-base stew."

Today, celebrities and culinary aficionados around the country flock to Uijeongbu, now a popular shopping district, and its Uijeongbu Budae Jjigae Street, where 10 of South Korea's original budae jjigae restaurants are found.

THE HISTORY

Almost every Korean meal includes a jjigae or *guk* (soup) of some kind. Not all guk is spicy, but as a rule, jjigae must be fiery and served piping hot. Different kinds of jjigae are defined by their primary ingredient—fish, crab, tofu, kimchi or roe, among others. The common ingredient: *gochu*, a spicy red pepper, known in the West as the chili, which originated in tropical America.

The history of when gochu arrived in South Korea is hotly debated, partly because it involves a centuries-old rivalry between Korea and Japan. But it figures in the story of jjigae because the pepper's arrival probably coincides with the creation of the generic stew.

Most scholars agree that Japanese invaders brought red peppers to Korea during the Imjin War in 1592, and that Koreans began fermenting them in the mid-1700s to make *gochu-jang*—a gochu paste—and jjigae.

Last year, however, a group of historians challenged that theory. Koreans consumed gochu centuries before the Imjin War, they say, citing evidence in cookbooks as early as 850 A.D. that include gochu-like peppers—which predated the chili peppers from the New World through Japan—in recipes for stews resembling jjigae. "These findings are completely opposite to the view that gochujang first came from Japan," says Jang Dae-ja, a historian at the Korea Food Research Institute in Seoul.

Given the history of jjigae, budae jjigae is a Johnny-come-lately because it wasn't created until the mid-1950s. At first, the soup had a reputation as a vile assortment of scraps, a meal of desperation in a poor and war-ravaged country. But as South Korea climbed out of poverty in the 1960s and '70s, families in Uijeongbu became prosperous enough to open their own budae jjigae restaurants, and this helped lift the Spam-based stew to a place of respectability among other popular, traditional jjigae.

THE SETTING

"Budae jjigae satisfies two needs of Koreans: fast food and traditional stew," says Dr. Jang, the food historian. Gochujang takes up to two years to ferment, prompting many Koreans today to abandon cooking traditional jjigaes in favor of the commercially produced pastes and meats found in budae jjigae. "Still," Dr. Jang points out, "they want to have the Korean stew they've been eating since they were young."

Most restaurants serve budae jjigae for lunch and into the wee hours of the morning, so enthusiasts—some of whom travel hours to get to Uijeongbu—can still catch a bite after work. The stew is usually eaten with white rice: Diners ladle a bit of jjigae onto the rice and eat.

Lately, says Sook Ho-kee, 76, the owner of a famous 40-year-old restaurant in Uijeongbu called Udang Seekdang, "budae jjigae has become more a food for students and young people. It has all the tastes of the older fancier jjigaes, but at a much lower cost."

THE JUDGMENT

As with all jjigaes, a meticulously prepared broth will deliver a tart and biting, but not too salty, bowl of army-base stew.

If a chef neglects to balance ingredients to a fraction of a teaspoon, the broth will lose its punch, says Ms. Sook. "It's the kimchi, the broth, and the sauces together that will decide whether the bowl is too salty, sour, or sweet," she says, adding that she ages her kimchi for two years to give her stew a sour jab.

Others take pride in their selection of canned meats. "We spend a lot of money importing the original meats and Spam from the U.S.," says Mr. Kim, despite the fact that Spam also is produced in South Korea. "That's the only way to recreate the original taste from the 1950s," he insists.

THE SOURCES

Udang Seekdang is Uijeongbu's culinary big bang. For 40 years, Ms. Sook, the owner, has served a frightfully sour and meaty stew—advisable for adventurers with stomachs of steel. Uijeongbu-dong 220-58; ☎ 82-2-842-0423; $24 to $28 for a hot pot that serves up to four people.

Hyoeng Jae Seekdang purveys a sweeter stew with hints of fruit, better for those starting out. Add bacon or cheese for an extra dollar. Uijeongbu-dong 220-62; ☎ 82-2-848-5868; $24 to $28 for a hot pot that serves up to four people.

Though it's not in Uijeongbu, Sangtan Budae Jjigae is a great option for those who want to stay in downtown Seoul and still get a taste of the original stew. The broth, however, is blander than what you'll find in Uijeongbu. 153-35 Samseong-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul; ☎ 82-2-566-1211; $5 to $7 a bowl.

Geoffrey Cain is a writer based in Seoul.

WHAT'S NEXT

OLIVIER HUMBRECHT

By Craig Winneker

As if French winemakers didn't have enough problems. An economic slump is slashing sales and they're facing ever-tougher competition from New World winemakers, who have greater freedom to design their wines to suit a fickle public.

Now they have to grapple with climate change, which threatens to redraw the map on global wine production.

After three decades of rising average temperatures, Central France's cooler Burgundy region is more like the balmy Rhône, in the south; Bordeaux is as warm as Barcelona. Winemakers today face a choice: Adapt or go out of business.

Olivier Humbrecht, whose Grand Cru Rieslings and Gewürztraminers are considered among the best in Alsace, is trying to plan for an uncertain climate future at his acclaimed Zind-Humbrecht winery near Colmar, in eastern France.

Another in a series of articles pondering the shape of things to come

Mr. Humbrecht grows his grapes organically. He's one of a growing number of winemakers who favor natural pest control over chemicals, and harvest by hand instead of machine where possible. He is also one of the few winemakers to have earned the Master of Wine designation, a well-respected credential from the the Institute of Masters of Wine that denotes a high level of expertise about wines from all over the world.

The 46-year-old winemaker says in the short term he can cope with the sharp fluctuations in the weather that climate change has brought. But if current warming trends continue, Mr. Humbrecht says, in 20 years he may have to stop growing the varietals that have made Alsace famous and start growing grapes that traditionally have been cultivated farther south, such as Cabernet Sauvignon or Syrah.

Mr. Humbrecht already is lobbying French authorities to relax restrictions on what grape varietals can be planted in which regions; these laws have made it tough for French winemakers to adapt to rising temperatures and changing palates, he says. "A little bit of room to experiment, innovate and change would be extremely helpful in today's conditions," he adds.

Winemakers around the world face similar problems. Spanish winemakers are moving vineyards to higher altitudes; Germans are shifting from white to red; Australians are enduring drought conditions. Experts say the increased cost and hassle of cultivating grapes under harsh conditions will make wine more expensive and top vintages harder to come by.

Global warming hasn't been all bad for winemakers, however. For the past 30 years or so climate change has been a boon, with warmer temperatures making it easier to harvest ripe fruit. A recent study at four American universities found a direct correlation between rising temperatures in the past few decades and vintage quality: the warmer the year, the better the critics liked the wine. But eventually, when average temperatures reach a certain point, as they have already in some extreme wine-growing locations such as southern Spain and southern Italy, quality begins to decline.

We met Mr. Humbrecht at his ultra-modern winery to talk about the challenges winemakers and wine-drinkers will face over the next several years. The Zind-Humbrecht tasting room overlooks hectares of vineyards, which on the day we spoke were covered in a blanket of snow.

Your family has been making wine here for generations. How is global warming affecting you?

If we knew that every winter would be very cold and every spring would be like this and every summer would be like that, it would be much easier to plan. But today the amplitude of change is so big, that is our real problem.

Do you have to make a decision in August that suddenly you will make a different style of wine this year?

I don't decide on the style of wine. Nature does. I can influence, I can give direction to the vineyard, and can make a

The winemaker, above, in one of his vineyards; below, a hand-carved wine barrel in the Zind-Humbrecht cellar in Turckheim, France

Domaine Zind-Humbrecht

Zind-Humbrecht's Grand Cru Rangen de Thann vineyard, overlooking the town of Thann, France

few decisions that will influence the wine slightly....At the end of the year, whatever I get, I harvest and I try to make the best wine possible out of that.

If the warming trend continues, will you have to make a completely different kind of wine?

What makes a good vineyard or a bad vineyard is not necessarily just the climate around it. It's more the ability of the soil to exploit the climate and to deliver interesting mineral components to the vine. I know for sure that what is my Grand Cru vineyard today will be my Grand Cru vineyard in 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, 100 years. But the way I will have to work that vineyard—that will be changing a lot.

You mean you'll grow different grapes?

If my Gewürztraminer cannot be adapted to this area because it will ripen too early...eventually I'll have to look at which other grapes and which cultivation methods will be more adapted to making wine that will be accepted by my consumers, critics, whatever.

The problem is...a mature vineyard produces good-quality wine when it's 20 or 25 years old. If I want to make good-quality wines in 30 years' time, I almost have to find them today. But what should I plant today? That's the big question. How will the climate change in 30 years' time? Nobody is 100% sure.

How can you continue to make what people think of as Grand Cru Alsace?

There are two solutions. One is I go into industrial wine, I tweak the wine, I add a lot of makeup to make it look pretty when in fact it's not nice. And today oenology is extremely competent at that.

Or, I stick to my philosophy. I respect my area, and I want the style of the area to show through the vine. I will have to change to express my art. If Gewürztraminer or Riesling don't fit the area anymore I'll be very happy to change grape variety. The wine will still be good, the wine will still show the characteristic spiciness and aromatics of this area, but expressed through a different style of wine.

Are there certain wine-growing areas that are threatened in the short term?

If I were in Australia I would worry a lot, because water will be an issue....In some areas in Australia, and especially the way the vines are cultivated [there], they want a specific crop....They want X-thousand bottles per acre. They want to have consistent production. To do all this, they need water.

Global warming is leading to wine being made in some strange places.

The most unusual is Denmark. About six or seven years ago, I was invited to a tasting for the Danish Embassy. There were seven or eight wine producers showing their wines from Denmark, and some were good.

So as temperatures rise, should wine lovers start investing in Danish and British futures?

You might find the right climate, but you still need the soil part. In the south of England, they've got brilliant limestone, chalky soil. It's basically the continuation of Champagne into southern England. But is the climate OK? That's a question. How much does it rain in England, south of London, today? You can have the best soil possible but if you have too much water, forget it.

What do you think is the next big global trend in winemaking?

People will focus on wine with character. They want quality, more terroir-driven, origin-driven, they want a signature on the wine, they're not just buying the grape variety or the style of wine, they also want a history behind the wine.

Also, there's definitely a return toward local consumption. The wine business was very bad in 2009. We saw sales drop in every country in the world...except in France, where our sales rose 35%. It's not because we are focusing more on France....There is a kind of cocooning going on.

Craig Winneker is a writer based in Brussels.

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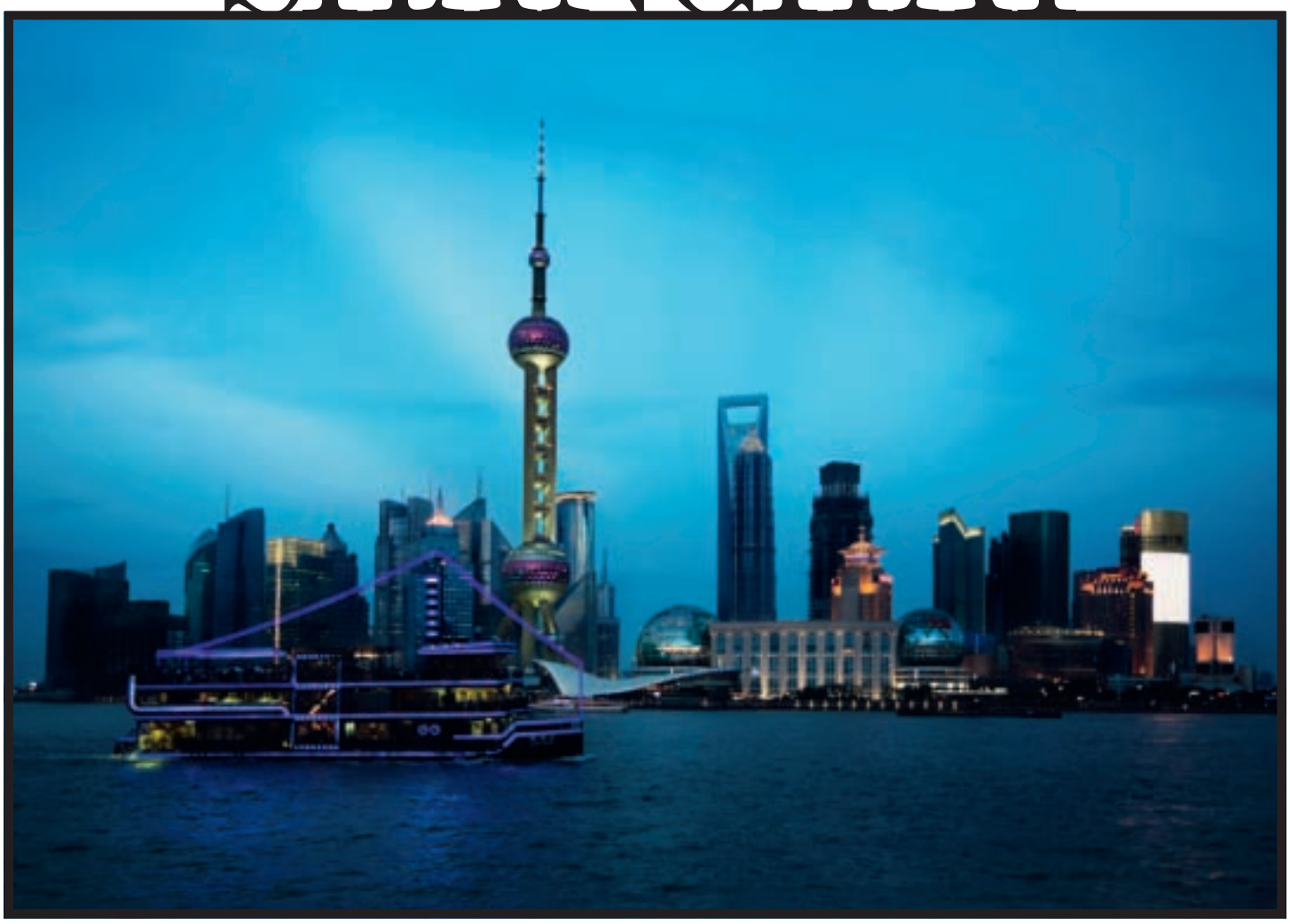
AFTER HOURS: SHANGHAI



Newscom (skyline); Chad Ingraham for The Wall Street Journal (2); Mr Willis

After the sun sets on Shanghai, above, the curtain rises at the city's retro-burlesque house Chinatown, left.

In the newly spiffed French Concession, some echoes of the decadent city of old

By Dinny McMahon

Another in a series on ways for a traveler in a strange town to fill the time after the sun goes down

Shanghai's nightlife is in the unenviable position of having to live up to its own decades-old reputation.

One of a handful of Chinese ports taken over by Western powers in the wake of the 19th-century Opium Wars, by the 1920s the city was riding high on a great wave of global trade, secure in the knowledge that China was too poor and fractured to evict its foreign squatters, and reveling in the post-World War I *joie de vivre*. Home to a melting pot of financiers, entrepreneurs and refugees from around the world, Shanghai became a byword for high living, decadence and debauchery.

Today the city is gradually reclaiming its status as a trading and financial hub, its spiraling skyline in historical continuity with the hulking colonial-era bank headquarters across the Huangpu River. And while the Chinese Communist Party may stand as a bulwark against the re-emergence of anything-goes revelry in its showcase city, Shanghai is also gradually reclaiming some of its old romance.

The Bund, the old financial district that lines the river's west bank, is home to some of the city's best bars, restaurants and views, and any hotel concierge can provide a list of top locations. But to the west, another area of the city is slowly staking a claim as the true romantic soul of Shanghai after years of neglect. And with the Bund converted into a construction site in preparation for the World Expo, scheduled to start in May, there's no better time to explore the hidden delights of the former French Concession.

The Concession was an area under French administration starting in the mid-19th century. The British and Americans at times had their own zones as well, but even today the French Concession stands out among the formerly foreign-run areas for its narrow tree-lined main streets, picturesque villas and striking Art Deco facades. It's not exactly a slice of Paris—many of the best villas are hidden down alleyways, colonial-era buildings are obscured by bolted-on shop-front veneers, and there are frequent reminders of 30 years of haphazard development—but its charms hang on.

And the prospect of the Expo is helping spur improvements. The city government is kicking in with features such as new sidewalks, and private investors are doing the rest. Buildings that I've walked past for years without a second thought are being renovated to their 1930s glory.

"This is the only reason to live in Shanghai. Who wants to live in skyscraper land?" says Craig Willis, owner of Mr Willis, a fairly recent addition to Shanghai's restaurant scene. Nestled in one of the city's quaintest streets, it sits in a newly created third floor above a strip of old shop fronts.

The food is best described as "modern Australian," a cuisine that takes its influences from everywhere. Mr. Willis himself was once head chef at Bennelong, a fine-dining restaurant in the Sydney Opera House, before moving to China eight years ago to work at M on the Bund, a Shanghai institution and still one of the city's best restaurants.

But the restaurant Mr Willis—as the name would suggest—is his own project. "It's like a dinner party at Craig's house, but there are just more tables now," Mr. Willis says. The décor feels very homey as well, and theatrical lighting, focused on each table, provides an intimate feeling despite the crowd. And while the building itself may not be old, the rough wooden floor boards have been salvaged from an old villa on the Bund that was being demolished.

Less than five minutes away by cab is Franck, a French restaurant tucked down an alleyway behind a massive villa that still houses multiple Shanghai families. Owner Franck Pecol is the very model of a bistro owner: bald head, black-rimmed glasses and a turtleneck. Although he no longer works in the kitchen, he was a chef in Vietnam, Miami, Havana and around the Mediterranean before settling in Shanghai almost six years ago. "I love the feeling of riding my bike from home," he says. "I love the contrasts of this city."

Franck opened here in 2007 and Mr. Pecol is now expanding into the shop front next door where he is building a bar.

"A French restaurant in the French Concession makes a lot of sense to me," Mr. Pecol says. The menu, 40% of whose dishes may change from day to day (depending on the fresh produce available), is completely in French, but the waiters are happy to help with translations. There's also a selection of some 400 wines. Warm and cozy—with black wood floors and dark leather couches—Franck makes a perfect escape from Shanghai's cold, wet winter.

For a quiet drink after dinner, the area is dotted with Japanese cocktail bars. Some are so small they sit no more than 20 people, but have a range of spirits to keep any whiskey aficionado cooing. If you want to be sure of a seat, your best bet is the low-light, two-story Constellation 2, which evokes an older Shanghai without trying too hard. The bar runs the length of the room with densely packed spirit bottles illuminated on the wall behind it. Patrons lounge in stylish leather armchairs and sofas, and the barmen chisel the ice by hand, carving ice balls that slowly melt into your whiskey. The only thing first timers may find a little off-putting is the blue glow given off by clear drinks like gin and tonics, brought on by the subtle blue lights overhead—but as a rule they're soon choosing drinks specifically for their luminescence.

The best way to end an evening in Shanghai is with a trip to Chinatown. About 15 minutes by taxi from the French Concession and a little north of the Bund, it's a burlesque club—or at least as burlesque as the Ministry of Culture will allow—and a little slice of an older Shanghai

At Constellation 2, the light comes filtered by shelves of bottles.

THE DETAILS

Franck
376 Wukang Rd.
(Ferguson Lane)
☎86-21-6437-6465
Web: www.franck.com.cn
Tuesday to Sunday,
6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. (last order)
Brunch Saturday and Sunday,
noon to 2:30 p.m.
Closed Mondays

Mr Willis
1/F, 195 Anfu Lu (near Wulumuqi Lu)
☎86-21-5404-0200
5 p.m. to late
Brunch Saturday and Sunday
from 11 a.m.

Constellation 2
☎86-21-5465-5993
2/F, 33 Yongjia Lu
7 p.m. to midnight

Chinatown
471 Zhapu Lu, Hankou District
☎86-21-6307-7607
Web: www.chinatownshanghai.com
Wednesday to Saturday,
8 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Show starts around 11 p.m.

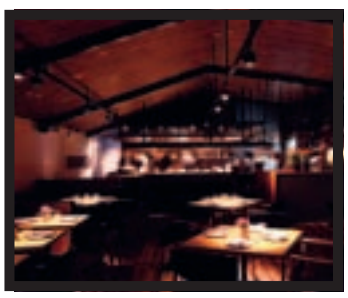
brought back to life. The venue is a drawing card in itself. Built in 1931 by the Japanese as a Buddhist-Shinto temple, it most recently housed an Egyptian-themed karaoke parlor. Co-proprietor Norman Gosney chose the spot after scouting all over town by bicycle. He and partner Amelia Kallman then turned the place into an homage to Hollywood's version of 1930s Shanghai.

"The thing I love about this town is that you go out and meet people," says Mr. Gosney. "You meet your investors at parties!" That's what saved the dream after the financial crisis sent the club's U.S. backers running. Now, he and Ms. Kallman— "Ms. Amelia"—are on stage four nights a week as part of an eclectic mix that includes a lounge singer, a troupe of six showgirls called the Chinatown Dolls and a towering MC who was formerly of the Welsh Guards. According to Ms. Kallman, the performers add two or three numbers a week, so even repeat visitors are likely to see something new.

Chinatown is more than the variety show—it's a party that involves the whole 200-capacity club and is more than likely to continue after the performers take their final bow at 2 a.m., the official closing time. "Come the end of the show, people have already been there four or five hours. Who stays anywhere four or five hours?" says a clearly delighted Mr. Gosney, no stranger to building clubs. He started in 1960s London and then moved on to New York, where the spots he built include the Slipper Room, a burlesque club that has been running for 10 years. And he knows what he wants, which is for his patrons to come dressed with a touch of class—or at least eccentricity. In a city that has its fair share of megaclubs pumping out the same anodyne music you can find anywhere on Earth, Chinatown is pure Shanghai and the best option for those looking to avoid the sneaker-set in the wee hours.

The greatest disappointment for visitors to Shanghai is that there's no single great sight to see—no Forbidden City, no Imperial Palace, no Harbour Bridge. It's a city that needs to be taken as a whole, to enjoy the juxtaposition of new and old and of constant change. A night out will give you a taste of that better than any guided tour. And while a visit to the Bund will give you a sense of Shanghai's style and grandeur, it's in the narrow back streets that you'll find some of the long-hidden charms of a decadent city.

Even under its very high ceiling, Mr Willis is somehow intimate.



CITY WALK: Hong Kong

A ride around the city on its 'ding dings'

By Rosanne Barrett

Skyscrapers are a constant along Hong Kong's waterfront. From dusk to dawn, the island blazes with thousands of office lights, a testament to Hong Kong's role as a world financial center. But just a few streets in from Victoria Harbour lies evidence of the city's rich cultural history and heritage. Discovering it is as easy as getting on one of the island's cheap and easy-to-use trams, which trundle across the island west to east and back again.

The transportation system began operating in 1904, and the narrow cars—double-deckers with wooden sides—are regarded with affection by locals, who colloquially refer to them as "ding dings," for the sound the tram bells make as the cars roll along the tracks.

Some locals feared a loss of heritage last April when French company Veolia took a 50% stake in the tram's owner, Wharf Holdings. But the network—16 kilometers of overlapping routes that run along what was once the waterfront of Hong Kong island—has so far remained untouched. And the fare remains a meager HK$2 (26 U.S. cents).

This walk covers the districts between Sheung Wan and Happy Valley, with strolls through four neighborhoods and tram rides in between. It offers a glimpse into the diversity of Hong Kong, including scenes of traditional Chinese medicine, the first point of European settlement, Hong Kong's famed horse-racing track, billion-dollar buildings and the city's charming wet markets.

10 A.M. WESTERN MARKET

Start at Sheung Wan's Western Market, the oldest market building in Hong Kong. Built in 1906, the two-story structure of red brick and granite combines a classical, many-arched facade with a roof of Chinese pan-and-roll tiles. Inside, the old market has been replaced by shops offering fabrics and tourist curios, interesting for a quick look.

Exit the building and walk away from the harbor up Morrison Street, before turning right onto Bonham Strand, which veers to the right and becomes Bonham Strand West. The western stretch of Bonham was the center of trade in traditional Chinese items in the 1850s. A major trading company, Nam Pak Hong, facilitated trade between the north and south of China (its name translates as South North Chamber of Commerce). Ginseng and deer antlers came from the north, while *bêche-de-mer* (sea cucumber) and bird's nests came from the south.

Today, Bonham Strand West is still home to many specialty shops selling ginseng and bird's nests, both held by traditional Chinese medicine to increase longevity and energy. Shops along this road also sell pungent but popular dried-seafood items, including shark fins, squid, starfish and shrimp for use in Chinese haute cuisine.

At the end of Bonham Strand West, turn left. At the next block, Queen Street, take another left and then make an immediate right onto Ko Shing Street, known for its shops selling Chinese herbs. Inside each shop are hundreds of glass jars, cardboard boxes and labeled plastic containers holding everything from dried deer antlers (now many are from New Zealand) to 20-centimeter-long dried fungi to dried cuttlefish to herbal teas. It is a busy street that buzzes with energy, with constant deliveries arriving for the shop owners, who sit out front perusing life going by.

Turn left at Sutherland Street and take another left onto Queen's Road West, the first road the British built after colonizing Hong Kong in 1841. It runs east to the nearby Sai Ying Pun area, where the first British military camps were located. Along the right side of the street, you'll come across some shops selling supplies for traditional Chinese funerals. In addition to incense and flower arrangements, these include paper replicas of everything a person could want in the afterlife—houses, mobile phones, beer, Louis Vuitton bags and even McDonald's meals—to be burned along with "hell money" or "joss paper" that is intended to cover the deceased's cash needs (or even to serve as a bribe to shorten the stay in a sort of purgatory).

Follow Queen's Road West for about 400 meters and make your second right. This is Hollywood Road, home to many of Hong Kong's art and antique shops. After you pass the park and sitting-out area on your left (opposite the Central Park Hotel), turn left onto Possession Street and walk down the hill. This is where the British first claimed Hong Kong for the empire, in January 1841, following the First Opium War. Follow Possession Street down the hill, cross Queen's Road to Bonham Strand East and head toward the harbor until you reach Wing Lok Street and return to the Western Market.

11.30 A.M. TRAM TO CENTRAL

At Western Market, a terminus for two of the tram routes, jump on any car except those going to Kennedy Town or Whitty Street (which will take you back to Sheung Wan). Find a seat upstairs, which will provide a bird's-eye view of the street and its busy goings-on: scrap collectors riding bicycles equipped with huge baskets, elegant businesswomen in high heels talking on mobile phones and everyday workers taking lunch at roadside cafes. As the tram clatters along, you even can spot the International Finance Centre—Hong Kong's tallest building (at least until the International Commerce Centre across the harbor in West Kowloon is complete)—poking up between its shorter neighbors.

Stay on the tram as it travels along Des Voeux Road Central, past gleaming skyscrapers and narrow lanes that are home to a higgledy-piggledy collection of small stalls selling miscellany ranging from fashion accessories to toys. After about 15 minutes, you'll reach Statue Square (on your left), a large public space with a fountain and sitting-out area. Alight the tram, paying the fare as you leave. Should you visit on a Sunday, there will be hundreds of Filipina domestic workers sitting in the square, gathering on their single day off, as they do in public areas all over Central.

On the eastern side of Statue Square is the Legislative Council building, one of the few remaining colonial-era buildings in Hong Kong and now the center of the administrative region's local political power. When locals protest about political issues—as they did recently against a US$1 billion appropriation for a high-speed train—this is where they gather. Originally built as the law courts, it is watched over by a statue of the blindfolded Greek god of justice, Themis. During World War II, the Japanese used the domed building as its military-police headquarters.

But towering over it all is the HSBC building on the right side of the road. This steel-and-aluminum structure, designed by British architect Sir Norman Foster, remains impressively modern 25 years after its completion. (It cost HK$5.2 billion (about US$670 million at current exchange rates), which at the time was widely said to be the most ever spent on a building.) The innovative design creates a large public space underneath the first floor and uses reflective panels to light the interior. At night, its side supports are lit as part of the city-wide Symphony of Lights, making it appear like a robot—which is just what some Hong Kong residents call the building.

12 P.M HONG KONG CENTRAL

Walk through the open space of the HSBC building, turn right on Queen's Road Central and continue until you reach Duddell Street on your left. Walk up Duddell Street and climb the steps at the end; you will see a pair of hundred-year-old gas lamps, the only such lamps in use

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▶ To watch a video of this City Walk and see an interactive map of Hong Kong, click on **Asia.WSJ.com**.

Jing Jing Tsong

in Hong Kong today. Turn right at the top of the stairs onto Ice House Street and follow the road until you reach the red-and-white brick Old Dairy Farm Depot at the top of the hill that houses the Fringe Club, a contemporary arts hub. Built in 1890, the building was the cold storage for meat and ice in the colony.

To get a glimpse of Hong Kong's nightlife, take a short detour into the Lan Kwai Fong District: Go down the steep steps beside the Foreign Correspondents' Club (next door to the Old Dairy Farm Depot) to Wyndham Street, then cross the road and turn left onto Wellington Street. When you hit D'Aguilar Street, turn left and have a walk around.

This area hits its stride when the sun goes down and wealthy locals gather for a night out. Along the area's streets—Lan Kwai Fong, D'Aguilar, Wellington and Wo On Lane—there are hundreds of places for revelry. Returning to D'Aguilar Street, walk down the hill and cross Queen's Road Central onto a small, pedestrian-only lane. Walk through the lane, where to your right you will see the beautiful building housing Shanghai Tang, a high-end, modern Chinese-style clothing shop.

2 P.M. TRAM TO WAN CHAI

Get back on the tram on Des Voeux Road Central and head east until you reach Wan Chai District. As you travel along, notice the Art-Deco style of the old Bank of China building next to the HSBC building. About 50 meters after that, you can't miss the sparkling new Bank of China Tower, designed by Chinese-American I.M. Pei. It uses five steel supports to carry the weight of the building, with glass covering the outside. Though it's considered an architectural gem of the city by some, others criticize it for feng shui reasons—for its triangle shapes and pointy tower.

The tram continues along Queensway, past the skyscrapers of the Admiralty District (including the Lippo Centre twin towers with their protruding windows). After the tram passes by Wan Chai's notorious nightclub area (the red-light district is just off Fenwick Street to the left) and onto Johnston Road, you'll see an 1800s heritage building on your right that now houses The Pawn restaurant (62 Johnston Rd., ☎ 852-2866-3444). Originally four tenement houses, it is now one of the city's fine-dining venues. If you didn't stop for food in Lan Kwai Fong, go to the dining room upstairs for a two-course set lunch of typical English fare for HK$150 (about US$19) plus a 10% service charge (not available Sundays).

After lunch, walk past the large playground—Southorn Playground—on your left. Look to your right to see the eclectic and bustling Tai Yuen Street, a market road filled with stalls selling cheap clothes, bags, accessories, costumes, flowers, fake flowers, souvenirs and shoes. Head down the lane, dodging the crowds, until you pass Wan Chai Market and hit Queen's Road East.

Take your next right onto Stone Nullah Lane. The most distinctive building here is the large blue house. It functioned as a community health-care center in the 1920s and a kung fu school in the 1950s and '60s and now is home to the Wan Chai Livelihood Museum, which occasionally organizes local walking tours. At the end of the street is the Pak Tai temple, the oldest in the area, where a statue of the local god Pak Tai has sat for 400 years.

Head back toward Tai Yuen Street until you see a lane on the right with many local eateries. This lane, officially called Cross Street, is a local market, full of meat shops and fruit and vegetable sellers. It is teeming with local atmosphere: people disputing the quality and haggling over the price of foods, examining the produce and wandering with their shopping trolleys. Above the street, the space between the buildings is filled by large signs, while closer to the apartments loads of washing hangs drying from sturdy hangers.

Walk down the lane until you reach Wan Chai Road and turn left. At the next block you'll be back on Johnston Road.

3 P.M. TRAM TO HAPPY VALLEY

At the tram stop at Johnston and Fleming roads, get on a car marked Happy Valley for the final leg. It trundles along Hennessy Road past hundreds of shops, along the way crossing under the Canal Road Flyover, a motorway to a tunnel that burrows under Victoria Harbour to Kowloon. On the sidewalk beneath the motorway you can often see old women sitting on stools amid wafting incense, particularly at night. They are offering a traditional southern Chinese service: It is here that one can arrange for them to "beat the petty person"—remove a troublesome person from one's life—by striking an effigy. The client must merely supply a picture of the troublesome person, or something belonging to him or her; the women will do the rest.

The tram then winds around the city's local shopping mecca, Causeway Bay, revealing its busy lanes and alleyways, packed with boutiques and department stores, passing Leighton Centre and its Goods of Desire store—GOD—a Hong Kong institution of witty tchotchkes, cool homewares and designer clothing. Huge crowds swarm this area, especially on weekends.

Finally, it will carry you farther into the upmarket and leafy suburb of Happy Valley, past the Craigengower Cricket Club and the Hong Kong Football Club. This is Hong Kong's sporting hub, where prime land is given over to rugby and soccer fields. It's also home to the Hong Kong Island race track of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, which you can spy from the top level of the tram.

The Jockey Club holds a monopoly on all forms of gambling in Hong Kong; operating as a nonprofit entity, it returns millions of dollars to the community. During the season ended last June (it begins each September), horse-racing bets brought in about US$8.7 billion. More than 10% of the administrative region's annual tax revenue comes from racing bets made at the Jockey Club.

Once you arrive at the Happy Valley tram terminus, you have reached the end of the walk. To return to the start, simply take another tram marked "Western Market." As you pull away, you will pass colonial-era cemeteries and see the green-grass splendor of the race track, quiet reminders of the island's history.

Rosanne Barrett is a writer based in Hong Kong.

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A Cultural Revival

The spirit of Japan's Ainu artists

By Lucy Birmingham

Koji Yuki was 20 years old when he turned against his father and buried his Ainu identity. That was the year Shoji Yuki died; a radical activist, he had long fought to win legal rights for the Ainu, Japan's underclass, and have them recognized as an indigenous people. More than a century of government-backed racial and social discrimination and forced assimilation had stripped the once-proud hunter-gatherers and tradesmen of their identity and livelihood.

The Ainu cause had torn apart the Yuki family. "My father divorced my mother when I was young and devoted himself to the Ainu liberation movement," says Mr. Yuki. "I couldn't understand the way he lived his life."

Years later, Mr. Yuki changed his mind about his father's efforts, and today the son is himself a powerful voice for the Ainu. But he speaks through culture rather than politics, as one of the leaders of a remarkable revival of Ainu arts, dance and music—with a cool, contemporary edge.

Koji Yuki's wood-block prints mostly depict animals of his native Hokkaido, such as this deer.

The origins of the Ainu are still debated. The most popular theory is that they are descendants of the Jomon people who lived throughout Japan 13,000 years ago. They are considered a race different from the "mainland" Japanese, who are called "Wajin" in the Ainu language.

The Ainu eventually settled in Japan's north, and for centuries their villages dotted Sakhalin Island and the Kuril Islands. (These were seized by the Soviet Union at the end of World War II, though Japan has disputed the claim for four of the Kuril Islands.) The Ainu culture fell victim to Japanese expansion in the 1800s, and most Ainu now live in Hokkaido, the second-largest of Japan's four main islands. In 2006 the Hokkaido government put the number of people of Ainu ancestry there at about 24,000; the national census doesn't include such a count, but after generations of intermarriage the total is far larger. Many hide their Ainu identity, still fearful of discrimination.

Handsome with a powerful gait, Mr. Yuki, 45, reveals a shyness as he explains his work as a *hanga* (wood block print) artist. "Hanga is not part of the Ainu traditional arts, but woodcarving is," he says. "So I asked my favorite Japanese hanga artists to teach me. I might be the only

This is part of an occasional series on Vanishing Asia. As urbanization continues apace across the region, historical sites and traditional ways of life are rapidly disappearing. In the coming months, Weekend Journal will take a look at efforts around Asia to preserve the past.

Mina Sakai sings in English, Japanese and Ainu, accompanying herself on a traditional tonkori—equipped with a nontraditional electric pickup.

Jun Takagi for The Wall Street Journal

Ainu doing this professionally." His prints are mainly of animals native to his Hokkaido homeland, such as the deer, fox, bear, owl and magnificent red-crowned crane. The island, known for its severe snowy winters (it's a popular ski destination), is the site of breathtaking mountain ranges, volcanoes, lush forests and crystal lakes, and unique flora and fauna. It's easy to understand the Ainu reverence for nature and the animistic belief in spirits.

"My prints are based on traditional Ainu legends, mainly animal spirits," says Mr. Yuki at a one-man exhibition in Tokyo. "The bear is especially important." Among the Ainu, the bear is considered the most sacred of animals; one of the works in the exhibition is "Hepere Cinita," or Dream of the Baby Bear. (All the works in the exhibition carry titles in the Ainu language.) His "Sarorun Kamuy," or Crane God, he says, "represents the Ainu's desire to return to their roots, like the great cranes that migrate back to Hokkaido every winter."

He created the work in 2008, after the Ainu won official indigenous status from the Japanese government. That followed the U.N. General Assembly's passage in 2007 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and came just before a 2008 Group of Eight wealthy nations summit in Hokkaido.

Mr. Yuki the hanga artist and carver is also a musician, founder and leader of the Ainu Arts Project, a decade-old community-based music group. "We're a native rock band based on traditional Ainu music," says Mr. Yuki, explaining that he was inspired by the aboriginal Australian band Yothu Yindi and Native American bands. The 25 members, from kids to seniors, perform 50 to 60 times a year. They sing mainly in the Ainu language and dress in the splendid Ainu *attusi* robe. Along with the guitar, drums and bass, they play the Ainu *tonkori* (like a zither) and *mukkuri* (similar to a jew's harp).

"We've chosen a rock sound because we don't want people to associate the Ainu with just old tradition," Mr. Yuki explained. "With hanga, music and singing I can convey the traditional Ainu culture and spirit with new expressions, just like Oki and Mina Sakai."

Mina Sakai is a 27-year-old muscian who founded the Ainu Rebels hip-hop group; Oki is Oki Kanno, the dynamic, 50-something leader of the Oki Dub Ainu Band, and probably the Ainu's biggest star. Half-Ainu and half-Japanese (as is Ms. Sakai), Mr. Kanno has taken the band on tours of the U.S., Australia, South America, Europe and Africa, and collaborated with numerous indigenous artists, including the well-known Native American flutist R. Carlos Nakai and the Austalian aboriginal band Waak Waak Jungi. The band's sound is a hot, rhythmic fusion of reggae (hence the "dub," a reggae genre), African music and electronica highlighted with traditional mukkuri and amplified tonkori.

"I'm called the 'Tonkori Man,'" Mr. Kanno says after a recent Tokyo gig where the packed house, including fans from Brazil, jumped and jived throughout the three-hour nonstop performance.

It was a tonkori that Mr. Kanno received as a gift in 1992 that persuaded him to pursue music. He had just returned to Japan after five years working in film production in New York City. Fluent in English (and its expletives), Mr. Kanno says he has no formal musical training. "But I've got my ancestors backing me, which makes my music strong," he adds. "My ancestors were really great. They created powerful rhythms and melodies, inspired by the different cultures they came in contact with through trading."

Unfretted, with three to five strings and a long, thin, wooden body, the tonkori is the Ainu people's only stringed instrument. With its limited pitch, it calls on the player to create rhythmic variations rather than melodies. Mr. Kanno spent 15 years getting his amplified version finely tuned; now he has a powerful, original sound that isn't drowned out by the bass and drums. Mr. Kanno is clear about his goal: "What I want to do is create a really cool Ainu groove, a new type of music."

A major impetus for the cultural revival was the Law for the Promotion of Ainu Culture, enacted in 1997 (a major turnaround from laws of the mid-1800s that cemented bans on the language and customs.) It led to the establishment of government-backed institutions such as the Ainu

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▶ To see more on the Ainu cultural revival, click on **Asia.WSJ.com**.

Culture Center in Tokyo, which opened that year.

Universities also are opening once-closed doors with courses in Ainu studies. Waseda University in Tokyo recently sponsored an indigenous-dance workshop with Native American Rosalie Daystar Jones and Ainu Rebels founder Ms. Sakai as guest teachers. (Ainu dance was added last year to Unesco's list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.)

Ms. Sakai, with a smile that lights up a room, has become an inspiration for young Ainu. Her own inspiration was a visit with Haida Indians in Canada during a high-school class trip. She loved their new songs—cool, positive and energetic. After years of facing discrimination in her Hokkaido hometown, she suddenly took pride in her Ainu heritage.

Ms. Sakai and her brother, Atsushi, started the Ainu Rebels in 2006 as a way to dig into their Ainu roots. The group wore attusi robes and Ainu headwear and incorporated Ainu ritual dances like the crane dance for women and the sword dance for men. Lyrics were sung in the Ainu language—with a fresh hip-hop take. Among older Ainu, reactions to the Rebels was mixed. "Because it was so new, some conservative elders didn't really like the idea, but others were happy about it," says Atsushi Sakai. The Tokyo-based group grew to eight members, all of Ainu descent, and was spotlighted as a case of empowered Ainu youth reviving and recreating Ainu tradition.

Ms. Sakai balanced her music with activism. In July 2008, just ahead of the G8 summit, she helped organize an event in Hokkaido that attracted indigenous peoples from around the world. The festival mixed traditional culture with calls for Ainu rights, including a formal apology from government leaders for past wrongs.

Caught between old and new worlds, Ms. Sakai is struggling to find her place as an artist. "It's important that I spread Ainu culture and create pride among the Ainu, so there is no more prejudice or discrimination against us," she explains. "But this means I am not totally free as an artist."

The Ainu Rebels disbanded last autumn because Ms. Sakai decided to pursue a career as a professional singer. (The Rebels were an amateur group.) In collaboration with composer Masashi Hamauzu, she is creating a contemporary sound that includes an amplified tonkori, with lyrics in English, Japanese and Ainu. "I'm now taking an Ainu language course," she says with a smile. "It's so important that the language is revived."

Like most Ainu, Ms. Sakai isn't fluent in the language (in which "Ainu" means simply "the people"). The language, which appears to have no genealogical connection with any other language family, is considered "critically endangered"—one step up from extinct—by Unesco, which cites a 2006 poll by the Hokkaido government that just 14 people believe they could teach it. Always spoken rather than written, the language was eventually recorded by transcribers in katakana, a Japanese syllabary, as well as Roman letters and Russian Cyrillic.

The Ainu epic narratives, called *Yukar,* were barely saved from extinction by transcribers such as Matsu Kannari, an Ainu who served as a Christian missionary. From 1926 until her death in 1961, Ms. Kannari (who wrote as Imekanu) recorded thousands of pages of the dramatic tales. Many are about gods, ancestors and heroes, and some are more than 8,000 lines long. Miraculously, they are still recited from memory by studious Ainu like Jirota Kitahara, 33, a bear of a man with a thick Ainu-style beard. Mr. Kitahara began learning the Yukar in earnest at 18, listening to old tape recordings of Yukar performances with his parent's Ainu music group.

"The Yukar are kind of like action movies," he explains. "Part of one epic I recited today is about a warrior who falls in love with a very beautiful lady he discovers among the enemy—a kind of 'Romeo and Juliet' theme." Mr. Kitahara's performance on the large Tokyo stage was far from the homey *irori*—sunken hearths—where Ainu storytellers of old entertained their audiences. But he captivated his audience, young and old, with a vigorous, undulating delivery that reverberated throughout the hall. Following tradition, he was accompanied by an assistant who set the tempo with the beat of a stick. While the Ainu language, Yukar, storytelling and folk tales are slowly gaining interest among the Japanese, Mr. Kitahara says there's a long way to go.

Illustrator and manga artist Sayo Ogasawara's solution lies in online picture books. Written in Japanese and Ainu, her "digital books" are part of a series of illustrated Ainu folk tales for children available on the Ainu Culture Center Web site. Kids can click onto tales like "The Girl Who Became a Woodpecker" that teach about Ainu history. (In the best fable tradition, they also carry morals. The woodpecker story's: Take care of your elders...or else!)

Left, Oki Kanno fronts his Oki Dub Ainu Band; above right, Jirota Kitahara, a performer of Yukar—Ainu epic narratives—in a traditional attusi robe; right, embroidery artist Shizue Ukaji, a maker of attusi robes

Jun Takagi for The Wall Street Journal

"My mother didn't teach me about Ainu things," says Ms. Ogasawara, who grew up in Hokkaido and now lives in Tokyo. "Ainu of her generation wanted to get rid of their heritage." Half-Japanese, she began to learn about her Ainu heritage in junior high school when writing a report on her family. Intrigued, she decided to learn more on her own. Tall with a graceful step, Ms. Ogasawara, 34, became a dancer and back-up singer with the Ainu Rebels. Now as she creates a new genre of Ainu art, she says, "There's so much I want to share. I'm still learning."

Embroidery artist Shizue Ukaji, 76, knows well the struggle to learn and the joy of sharing her heritage. "When I was a child, I really wanted to draw pictures, but like most Ainu we were so poor we had no pencils or paper to draw on," she recalls. In time, as a young adult, she was able to follow her passion. Protesting for Ainu rights followed, despite objections from many fellow Ainu. Now, as an elder, she is deeply respected for her years of dedication to the cause.

Drawing led Ms. Ukaji to embroidery and appliqué a decade ago. She may spend as much as a year making one of her traditional attusi robes, with appliquéd geometric patterns and intricate embroidery; they're prized for their beauty and worn for special occasions. (The traditional Ainu patterns, bold and stylized, have no representational meaning, though cuffs and hems are often embroidered with thorn-like shapes—as Ms. Ukaji explains, to "prevent evil spirits from entering the body.") Once made of fish and animal skins and later with textiles woven from tree bark and plant fibers, the robes are now mostly cotton.

One day, her embroidery led to an epiphany. "I realized, when threads are bound together, they become strong and something new," she says, pointing to a beautiful new attusi robe with geometric appliqué not unlike an abstract painting. Inspired by her ancestors, she used a material made from woven plant fibers. "Threads like these are important for all of humanity."

Lucy Birmingham is a writer based in Tokyo.

One for the books

Jaipur sets the bar for thriving literary festivals

By John Krich

Jaipur, India

The puffy saffron tents overflow with literati—and the scent of manure wafting from nearby stables. Honking cars drown out the shaky sound systems amplifying panel discussions. Immortals of the pen and Bollywood idols alike jostle in long lines for meals of soupy dal and curried potatoes.

Welcome to the Jaipur Literary Festival.

Why would Nobel laureates, major literary prize winners, world-renowned historians, famous poets and critics all beat a path around the globe to a dusty Indian provincial city?

Despite widespread perceptions that reading and serious literature are going out of fashion, festivals like Jaipur—places to mingle with well-known authors, often supplemented by musical performances and special events—are thriving world-wide. Most of the big-league ones are held nearer to where a good many more English-language writers live: Among them are New York's six-year-old PEN American Center World Voices Festival of International Literature, with its star-studded roster supervised by noted author Salman Rushdie, and the Guardian Hay Festival staged in Wales every May since 1998. The latter has branched out into popular franchises in places such as Nairobi and Belfast and added Spanish-language festivals in Segovia, Spain, and Cartagena, Colombia.

In Asia, the artsy town of Ubud on the Indonesian island of Bali has attracted a multicultural roster of English-language and Bahasa writers since it began hosting a festival in 2004. Even more surprising, the Shanghai International Literary Festival is headed into its eighth edition, though it no longer draws the bigger names from the West that it did in its early years. Like events in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong's festival, now a decade old and called The Man Hong Kong International Literary Festival, has been growing in appeal but still tends to concentrate on local, less-established writers. And in Australia, several cities hold annual writers' festivals, again, drawing mainly on their national luminaries.

Jaipur's festival has had a meteoric rise, mirroring India's economic development. In just five years, it has grown into the most lively and prestigious conclave of authors in Asia. The 2010 edition held last month featured 220 writers and performers, up from 140 the previous year. Admission is free and attendance jumped to 35,000 from 20,000 a year earlier—and that's only for the literature events, not the nightly entertainment.

The sudden leap could be attributed to individual factors like the global reach of Indiaphile author William Dalrymple, the festival's co-director. But the event also now stands as the symbol of a gravitational shift of the English-speaking literary world—the growing awareness

by bibliophiles and big-time editors alike that India is not just the world's third-largest market for English-language books, but, in a time of challenge from the Internet, this nation of more than a billion people has the potential to keep expanding its base of exceptional wordsmiths and energized readers.

"Writers are eager to come and engage with India now—it's viewed as a culturally exciting place," contends chief organizer Sanjoy Roy of Teamworks, an international planning and film-production company. "Only here has a certain amount of glamour attached to writers been grafted onto traditional respect for the word," adds Vikram Chandra, a 48-year-old professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and noted author of "Love and Longing in Bombay," a collection of short stories set in Mumbai.

Now, as with a generation of celebrated overseas Indian authors such as Mr. Rushdie, Anita Desai, Rohinton Mistry and Vikram Seth, the Jaipur gathering's main challenge, in fact, may be to maintain its special appeal in the face of success.

The five-day festival is "like some huge Indian wedding," says Mr. Chandra. "Its charm is that it is always veering toward chaos." Pointedly, organizers have refused to create any VIP enclosures or status, so that ordinary schoolgirls, housewives, even rickshaw drivers—along with plenty of Delhi literati and Mumbai's high-society set—can rub shoulders or trade barbs with illustrious authors in the flesh.

In fact, the festival began by accident, when Mr. Dalrymple was invited in 2005 to read as part of the annual Rajasthan Heritage Festival, organized as part of preservation efforts by John Singh, a relative of the last Jaipur maharajah, and his U.K.-born wife, Faith, who founded Anokhi, Jaipur's socially conscious fashion label.

The literary festival got its official start the next year with 16 authors in attendance. "Now it's expanded like some monstrous goddess," says Ms. Singh. "One of the driving notions was to bring back the writers of the Indian diaspora," adds 45-year-old British nonfiction author Mr. Dalrymple, who penned "City of Djinns" and "The White Mughals," among others. "After all, you saw these brilliant A-list writers in Sydney, at Borders Books or a PEN conference. The only place they didn't turn up was India."

The following year, in 2007, an appearance by Mr. Rushdie, once the target of an Islamic death order for his "Satanic Verses," put Jaipur on the global literary map. That same year, Mr. Roy, the film producer, joined to add the color and music that helped create what he calls "an intangible buzz." Mr. Roy adds that his job was made easy by the host city. "Jaipur, with its palaces and forts, is seen as a place that projects all the romance and valor of India. For middle-class Indians, coming here in January, when the weather is

THE WRITE PLACE

Other literary festivals in the region

PERTH WRITERS FESTIVAL
Feb. 25 to March 1
Web: www.perthfestival.com.au/events/perth-writers-festival

SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL
March 5 to 21
Web: www.m-restaurantgroup.com/mbund/literary-festival.html

THE MAN HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL
March 11 to 19
Web: www.festival.org.hk

SYDNEY WRITERS FESTIVAL
May 17 to 23
Web: www.swf.org.au

MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL
Aug. 27 to Sept. 5
Web: www.mwf.com.au

UBUD WRITERS & READERS FESTIVAL
Oct. 6 to 10
Web: www.ubudwritersfestival.com

Teamwork (4); Agence France-Presse (Hirsi Ali)

Clockwise from left, the Jaipur festival's co-director Namita Gokhale; Pakistani author H.M. Naqvi; Somali women's advocate Ayaan Hirsi Ali; writer and professor Vikram Chandra; William Dalrymple, the festival's co-director

mild, is a no-brainer."

Underpinning the festival is an alliance between Mr. Dalrymple's ample contacts and wide-ranging interests and the nationalist agenda of co-director Namita Gokhale, a 56-year-old feminist critic and editor. "William and I fight all the time—but that's what stokes our energy," Ms. Gokhale says. Her goal, as she puts it, has been "big on making sure this is a meeting place for writers based overseas with those working here. After all," she adds, "we've got 22 languages with a long history in India, not just the English that was imposed. So, in a sense, we're two festivals coming together under one roof—as nowhere else."

This year, Ms. Gokhale showcased Dalits, a group so far at the bottom of Indian society that they are known as "untouchables," as well as some exciting new Pakistani writers, including H.M. Naqvi. Invited for his splashy first novel "Home Boy," Mr. Naqvi says he "was especially pleased to meet Indians, from the animated denizens of Jaipur to serious-minded intellectuals...a Sikh and couple of cool Kashmiris."

"There has been a proliferation of South Asian writers in the last two, three decades," Mr. Naqvi adds, "And explicitly, implicitly, consciously or otherwise, we are all in conversation with each other."

In keeping with its aim of edginess, the festival brought in a special speaker at the last minute—Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the controversial Somalian woman who battles against clitorectomy and Islam.

Today, the festival's budget of $520,000 is mostly funded by DSC, a closely held Indian construction company. Other sponsors include foundations and embassies.

Even as it has grown, the festival remains refreshingly uncommercialized. "It's all so open and democratic," says 56-year-old editor Tina Brown, who is also a festival adviser. She has made the pilgrimage here two years running because "Jaipur is run by writers, not businessman, so they can make quirky choices. Every day is so intellectually refreshing and draws such an amazing collection of people that you can't help stumbling onto jewels."

Yet the festival itself threatens to stumble over some of its growing pains: Among them, tents and halls too small to contain crowds, a noticeable lack of workable toilets and water dispensers and transportation and technical snafus.

Still, plans are afoot to add two more tents next year—a new food court and larger bookstore. "The challenge in getting too big will be to keep the spontaneity," concedes Mr. Dalrymple.

With a toss of his trademark shoulder-length silver locks, Mr. Roy, the film producer, adds, "We just have to let the festival grow organically. It can't be contained, the madness of it."

John Krich is a Bangkok-based writer.

Words that touch

India's Dalit writers come into their own

By John Krich

Jaipur, India

Untouchable, maybe. But no longer unread.

Omprakash Valmiki, born into India's lowest social group, the Dalits—known widely as "untouchables"—says he was the first member of his family to "ever see the inside of a school building."

For 40 years he has worked for the Ministry of Defense in Dehradun—but by night the bureaucrat was doggedly composing poems and fiction. And when Mr. Valmiki came to the 2010 Jaipur Literary Festival to participate in a series of panels meant to recognize the importance of so-called Dalit literature, he drew larger crowds than many of the internationally known authors there. He was mobbed for autographs, and his works—which include the Hindi-language autobiographical novel "Joothan: A Dalit's Life," published in English translation in the U.S. by Columbia University Press—were among the first to sell out at the festival bookshop. (The English translation also appears with the subtitle "An Untouchable's Life.")

"What we're doing is creating a new history of India that's not in the textbooks," the soft-spoken, bespectacled 60-year-old says of the growing movement of Dalit writers. "To support their superiority, the majority invokes so many ancient myths. So we must create myths of our own."

The results are striking a popular chord—far beyond a community that is mostly illiterate—with readers both in India and abroad. Recent hits include "Untouchables: My Family's Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India," by Narendra Jadhav, who rose from poverty to become vice chancellor of the University of Pune; it was published in the West by the University of California Press.

"Not only have their books attracted a mass audience, but they are profoundly impacting the political landscape," says Christophe Jaffrelot, director of France's Center for International Studies and Research and an authority on the Dalits. He points to Mayawati Kumar, a Dalit who has become chief minister of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, as leader of the Bahujan Samaj Party.

Prof. Jaffrelot says the wide appeal of Dalit works lies in their being "very personal and intimate, dealing with the inner world of an individual in conflict with how society views them," while the work of Brahmin writers can come off as remote and abstract.

"We are drawing on a body of practical experience that we've gained through all the things we have made, the crafts, the carving, the carpentry, the textiles," says Mr. Valmiki. "Very little that you see in India was made by Brahmins—and everything carries the touch of those they call untouchable."

Omprakash Valmiki

P. Sivakami

Narendra Jadhav

Teamwork (2); Indiana University (Jadhav)

Direct protest is the message of much Dalit literature. In one poem, Mr. Valmiki cries out, "What would you do? /If you/ Have to swim against the current/ To open the doors of pain/ And do battle with hunger/ If you/ Are denied in your own land/ Made slave labor/Stripped of your rights/ The pages of your glorious history/Torn to shreds/And thrown away/What would you do?"

The most outspoken, and political, of the Dalit writers is Kancha Ilaiah, whose 1996 manifesto "Why I Am Not A Hindu" made him the target of death threats. Given to provocative claims like "while the Greeks were producing Plato and Aristotle, all the Hindus created was the Kama Sutra—a book that teaches what the animals already know," Mr. Ilaiah argues that a caste system like that of Hinduism is "spiritual fascism" that can't survive in these global times. (Millions of Dalits are estimated to have converted, mostly to Buddhism, but also to Islam and the appeals of Christian missionaries.)

Mr. Ilaiah, 57, credits Dalit creative writers with "building a new image for ourselves" much as pioneering African-American writers did for a people so recently enslaved. "In ending our 3,000-year slavery, the greatest vehicle for our liberation has been the English language."

Access to English-language schools has been a major advance for Dalits, though the group continues to suffer severe discrimination—including in education—more than 60 years after caste divisions were outlawed by India's constitution. (That founding document is the work of B.R. Ambedkar, an untouchable with degrees from Columbia who is viewed as the group's heroic role model.)

"How can we take the constitution seriously?" asks Mr. Valmiki. "There are still at least 1.3 milllion of us condemned to a scavenger class sent out each day to collect human feces—and their main employer is the Indian government."

"Though we may be one-quarter of the population," says P. Sivakami, a leading feminist voice among Dalits, "we are rarely represented in the mainstream media, in television or movies. In the past, we've only carried names like 'baby,' been portrayed as drunks or sexually lascivious, grateful to get molested by a master."

While she worked for years as a senior civil servant, including a stretch with the Indian tourist office in Tokyo, Ms. Sivakami says she always "wanted to be a creative writer...the most noble job, where words can generate consciousness." In 1988 she produced her first novel, "Grip of Change," which was also the first Dalit novel written in Tamil. (Translated by the author, it was published in English in 2006.)

"It's not easy when nothing prepares you for the situation of your own inferiority," says Ms. Sivakami, one of 13 offspring of an illiterate mother and a father who had only a third-grade education—but who rose to become a local legislator. Ms. Sivakami left the civil service in 2008 to enter politics and last month established the Party for Social Equity, plumping for everything from tribal to transgender rights. "The caste system," she says, "is a kind of evil spirit that has to be fought off."

In the fight, there are new allies such as young S. Anand, who in 2003 founded Navayana, a publishing house whose books deal with "caste from an anticaste perspective," and include many by Dalit writers.

Mr. Ilaiah believes there will be more writers to come. "We have already had our Martin Luther King," he says, referring to Ambedkar, author of the constitution. "But we've yet to bring forth our Obama."

Maya Lin and her husband, Daniel Wolf, in a 1998 portrait by Mariana Cook

THE COLLECTOR:

Maya Lin

The architect and artist talks about her latest collecting project *By Margot Cohen*

Maya Lin approached her latest mega-projec—"What Is Missing?"—with the acquisitive zeal of a born collector.

"I have over a thousand sounds of animals," says the Chinese-American conceptual sculptor, video artist and architect. That's not all. Over the past three years, with the help of scientists and conservationists, Ms. Lin has procured numerous satellite images, historical maps, poetic narratives, birdcalls and videos of such creatures as pronghorns, jaguars and toads.

The 50-year-old artist aims to turn this sweeping collection into a multimedia portrait of a planet in crisis—and galvanize public efforts to save species threatened with extinction. On April 22, to coincide with Earth Day, Ms. Lin's Web site, www.whatismissing.net, will go live, and a companion video will flash onto a giant screen above the bright lights of Times Square, New York City's theater hub.

The project harks back to the stark honesty of Ms. Lin's design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., which brought her fame (and controversy) almost three decades ago. The monument makes it impossible to ignore the 58,261 names of U.S. soldiers engraved on the shiny black granite. Likewise, it should be difficult to turn away from the sounds and images of a depleted ecosystem.

Normally, however, Ms. Lin tends to keep her collections well away from public view. She values privacy. She also prefers uncluttered spaces. Indeed, she and her husband, Daniel Wolf—an art dealer and film producer—have locked away the bulk of their possessions in a warehouse, opting to store such diverse objects as Scandinavian glass, Chinese ceramics, and contemporary American paintings and photography, along with Ms. Lin's personal rock collection, which she has been compiling since high school.

She confesses to an urge to purge. "What I used to do was terrible: I would finish a project, and I would burn everything. Just to cleanse and move on," she says. Her husband persuaded her to tuck away her old drawings instead.

Given the demands of creating "What Is Missing?"—including multimedia installations already on view in Beijing and California—Ms. Lin has chosen to take a break from architectural commissions. Six months ago, however, she managed to finish a job that helped her locate a missing piece of herself. She designed the Museum of Chinese in America, which opened in lower Manhattan in September 2009.

Ms. Lin says that the experience sharpened her desire to learn more and share more about the Chinese-immigrant experience. It also took her personal art collection in new directions, with her spouse offering assistance to source historical photographs that they might share one day with their two daughters.

Much of that heritage was kept under wraps during Ms. Lin's childhood. In 1949, her parents left China and settled in the U.S., and like many fresh arrivals, they were keen to see their children assimilate. They refrained from teaching Mandarin to Ms. Lin and her brother, and revealed little about the family's sparkling lineage of architects, doctors and legal scholars. Ms. Lin says she grew up largely oblivious of her roots, content to score top marks in high school, walk in the woods and immerse herself in science fiction.

These days, she is more riveted by scientific facts. In 2008, she used topographical data to create "Pin River-Yangtze," with 30,000 straight-steel pins to evoke the flow of China's famed river. In 2007-08, with "Storm King Wavefield," she took the concept of fluid dynamics and applied cartographic measuring methods to create a sculpture of gravel, earth

The thumbnail sketch

Home: New York City
Signature style: Conceptual landscape sculptures; historical monuments
What she collects: Rocks, American contemporary art and photography

Agence France-Presse

Ms. Lin had her breakthrough as a 21-year-old architecture student when she won a design contest for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, right.

MOCA

Working on the Museum of Chinese in America design sparked Ms. Lin's desire to learn more about the Chinese-immigrant experience.

and grass that mimics the scale, pace and pattern of midsea waves. Now, with "What is Missing?," Ms. Lin, hopes to alter the patterns of a wasteful world. We talked to her recently in her New York studio.

How did you start collecting?

Growing up, I would spend hours chipping away at this shale rock ledge [near my home]. It wasn't collecting so much as seeing what happens, over time. Then in high school, I just started picking up rocks. It was really in college that wherever I went, I always made it a point to find a couple of rocks that would remind me of the place. They became very personal mementos.

Where are those rocks now?

I have five or six crates in storage. I'll keep collecting them, and probably move them all out to [my summer home in] Colorado and put them outside someday.

Does your husband's collection also include rocks?

He collects double-terminated quartz crystals, by the ton. He has wild crystalline objects. One of my favorites is a deep-blue crystal that catches the light and almost glows. It's a fluorite. So the irony is, he collects pointy crystalline rocks and I'm collecting rounded rocks. Be that as it may...it's a match made in heaven!

The two of you are included in a book called "Couples: Speaking from the Heart" by the photographer Mariana Cook. Does your collection include other dual portraits?

Since my husband started out as a photography dealer, a lot of his colleagues and friends have given us these amazing portraits of the two of us. It's mostly black-and-white photography, from Lee Friedlander to Josef Koudelka to Annie Liebovitz—who did a wonderful portrait when I was pregnant. Each one is so different.

Do you keep all of those on display?

I love them, but we don't put them up. You don't want to look at yourself every day.

Do you trade work with other artists?

I had a group of friends [at Yale University], and afterward we were all in New York and we were always swapping art. It was a pretty interesting group of artists: Lisa Yuskavage, Richard Phillips, Carl Ostendarp, Sean Landers, John Currin and Beverly Semmes, among many others.

Did you put any of those works up on the wall?

Beverly Semmes used do to these big, beautiful oversize dresses. They would hang on the wall and drape 40 feet out. I got this beautiful yellow dress. It was up for a while, but I didn't want to get it dirty, so I carefully rolled it up and put it in storage.

How about the work by Carl Ostendarp that's hanging in your New York City studio?

It's a bit humorous. It's like a big earth, an ambiguous organic shape. You don't know quite what it is. It's made out of very high-tech insulation foam, which sort of expands as it goes.

What kind of artwork did you give your friends?

Some of them were little objects that I made out of broken glass.

Some were weird little wire landscapes. What I would call little "sketches," but the way a sculptor would draw—three-dimensionally. They were kind of intimate.

Do you have any favorite works that are hanging at home?

Our living room has...an 8x8 work by Andy Warhol, part of his camouflage series [from the mid-1980]. It has pale yellow hues. I tend to like things that are calmer in nature.

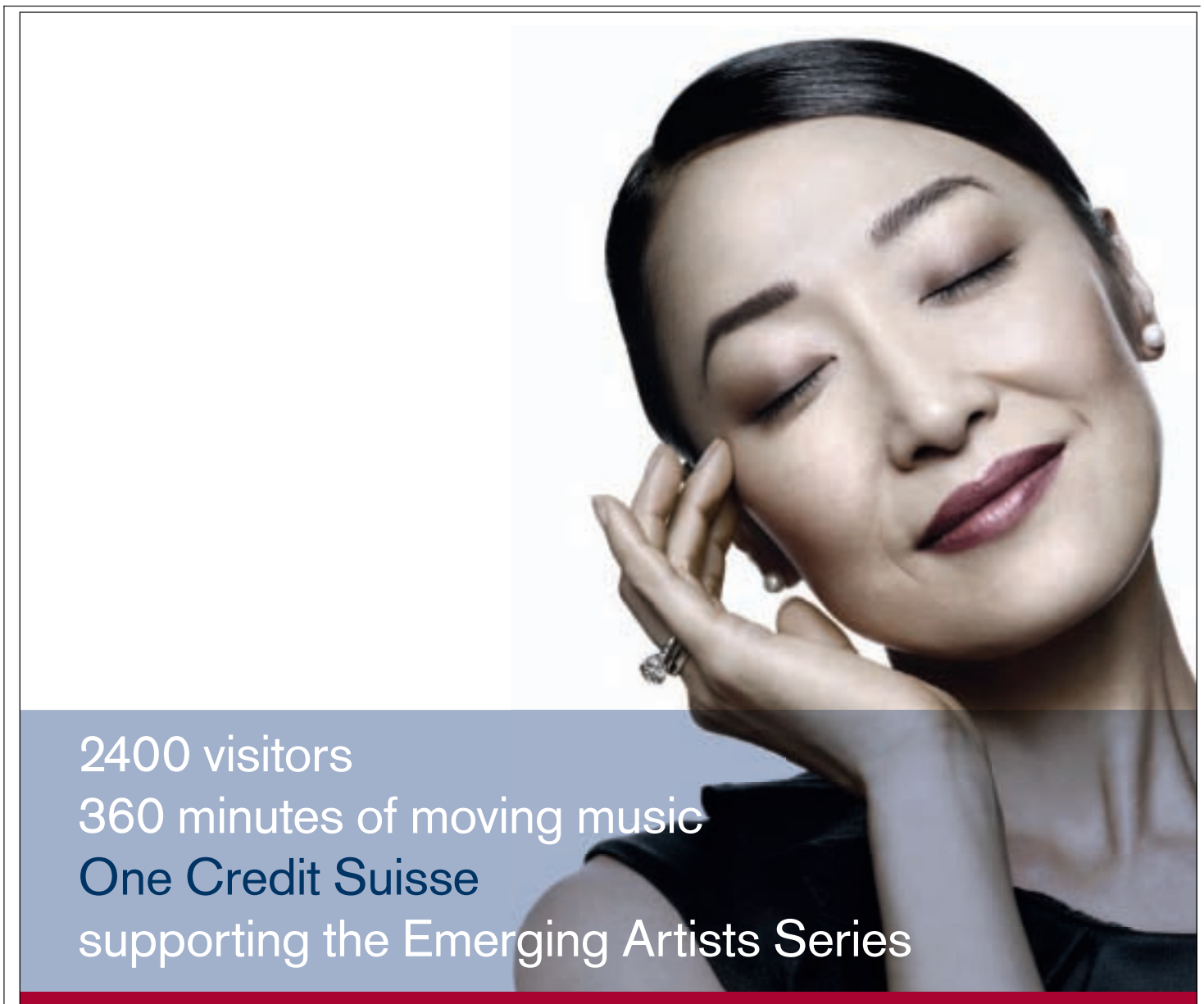
Much of your work involves shifting perceptions of the natural landscape. Does your collection reflect this interest?

There is so much beauty that science has unveiled that we don't call "art." Some of the most amazing images are the photographs that are coming back from NASA, from the Hubble [earth-orbiting telescope]. One thing up on my wall is a 1940s scientific sketch of the Gulf Stream. It's a beautiful little drawing.

Your grandfather collected ceramics; your father was a ceramic artist and a university dean of fine arts. Has this inspired your work?

I love the era of the celadon greens. At MOCA [the Museum of Chinese in America], we are working with my personal palette, my aesthetic. The building is completely green, in the sense that it uses recycled materials, sustainably harvested woods and nontoxic materials. So [for the museum's graphics] we introduced this beautiful celadon green. We banished the color red. The curator and I were talking, and I said: My mother dressed me up in too many red dresses. I hate the color red!

Margot Cohen is a writer based in Bangalore.



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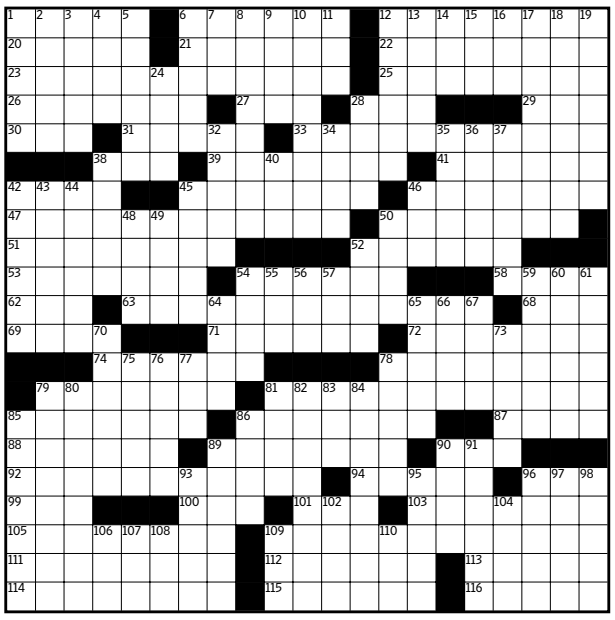

Across

1 Parisienne, par exemple
6 Plants
12 Entertainment for Old King Cole
20 In-box contents
21 Fishes' partner
22 Invitation to disaster, perhaps
23 Avian alopecia?
25 Voodoo doll, e.g.
26 Behind
27 Aug. hours
28 Role for Keanu
29 Trip around the track
30 Outlawed killer
31 Confectioner of fiction
33 Object thrown at a demonstration?
38 Japan's Big Board: Abbr.
39 Clinches
41 Mayo, for one
42 Nicholas II, e.g.
45 Jaded
46 It can make you square
47 Howard as a museum supporter?
50 Congo's Thomas Lubanga, for one
51 Operating alone
52 Ill-fated queen
53 Frasier's clientele
54 Yellowish pink
58 Robe feature
62 WWII command
63 Table request, and this puzzle's theme
68 Last in a series
69 Succumbs to gravity
71 Midsize VW model
72 Fat substitute
74 2009 portrayer of Scrooge
78 Person who gets everything
79 Blotto
81 Check mugs for lumps?
85 Finesse, e.g.
86 Gets off the track
87 Audible nudge
88 Didn't stiff
89 Some 94-Across
90 Period of history
92 Asset for bronze cleaners?
94 Carb-loading fare
96 Belief system
99 Bird with shaggy plumage
100 Waiting room read
101 Sem. subject
103 Olive center
105 Car bar
109 Money that makes the heart beat faster?
111 Sap
112 Canine cover
113 T choice
114 Did some lawn work
115 Comes down in the cold
116 Opera's Simon

Down

1 Rank
2 Correct
3 French Revolution figure
4 Ho Chi ___ City
5 Spots for some patches
6 Paula's replacement
7 All the rage, once
8 Colorful kerchief
9 Holiday lead-ins
10 Order for a malfunctioning rocket
11 Draft org.
12 Snapper servings
13 Expression
14 Divided terr.
15 Eminem's mentor
16 Dawson in the Pro Football Hall of Fame
17 It may be penciled in
18 "As You Like It" heroine
19 Mustard, for one
24 Skin soother
28 Coward of the theater
32 Entered, as data
34 Nest egg choices
35 Empathetic words
36 With craft
37 Hedge fund manager James Harris ___
38 Sing in a carefree way
40 Polite address
42 Hostility hiatuses
43 Hyundai model
44 Having hands
45 Activity requiring four bishops
46 Close one
48 Go wild
49 Turner of records
50 Habit
52 Ring event
54 Hotel visit
55 Sounds of contentment
56 Moonves of CBS
57 Wharton deg.
59 Tenochtitlan group
60 It's just one thing after another
61 Publisher of Cosmopolitan and Esquire
64 Made haste
65 Benders
66 Vogue rival
67 Atoll, essentially
70 Garlicky seafood dish
73 Figure
75 Skiing mecca
76 Role for Valerie
77 Brand of early runabouts
78 Celia Cruz's music
79 One of the B vitamins
80 Ecstatic states
81 Where hymnals are stored
82 Through street
83 "Love Story" composer
84 Diner dish
85 Basilica honoree
86 Vietnam's monetary unit
89 Conked
90 Going full tilt
91 Play the ponies
93 Didst deck
95 Yards, e.g.
96 Still
97 Something to act on
98 Major and minor, in music
102 Vichy verb
104 Pitching numbers
106 Before, poetically
107 "___ been had!"
108 Really cool
109 NBA stat
110 Apply 63-Across to this word in three pairs of answers

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Last Week's solution

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Bookshelf / *Tom Nagorski*

The French Connection

In November 1953, France was in its eighth year of war for control over Indochina. Things were going poorly—Vietnamese guerrillas, or Vietminh, held the upper hand—and at a strategy session in Saigon the French commander, Gen. Henri Navarre, outlined his latest plan. "I'm thinking of occupying the basin of Dien Bien Phu," he began. "The goal of this risky operation will be to defend Laos." He went on to argue that the move would draw the Vietminh into a battle they could not win. France had the advantage of air power. A base at Dien Bien Phu—in the northwest corner of Vietnam, near the Laos border—could be resupplied by air, while guerrilla leader Ho Chi Minh's cadres would be forced to move huge numbers of men and *matériel* through miles of mountain jungle.

Valley of Death
By Ted Morgan
(Random House, 722 pages, $35)

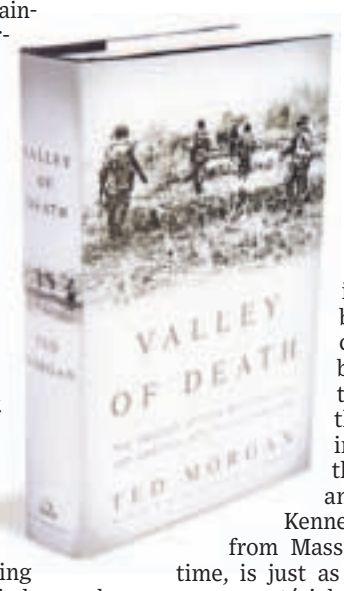
The politicians were onboard—but the officers balked. The military men were "unanimous in objection," one senior officer noted. Building a base in a mountain valley, they told Gen. Navarre, presented formidable challenges. Dropping in paratroopers would be dangerous, resupplying the base difficult, and Dien Bien Phu would drain manpower from more important theaters—all for questionable military gain. Nevertheless, Gen. Navarre got his base. Within months—on May 7, 1954, to be exact—Dien Bien Phu was overrun by the Vietminh. Two years later Gen. Navarre was rewriting history in his memoir of the war. "No unfavorable opinion," he wrote, "was expressed before the battle."

The annals of warfare are of course studded with questionable military decisions and after-battle lies, but for sheer hubris and incompetence it is hard to match what happened before and during the 56-day battle for Dien Bien Phu. Ted Morgan's "Valley of Death" is an authoritative account of those days—but it's also a history of the early U.S. involvement in Indochina. "The words Dien Bien Phu," President Dwight Eisenhower told a conference of newspaper publishers in April 1954, "are no longer just a funny-sounding name to be dismissed from the breakfast conversation because we don't know where it is."

Nearly every French assumption would be punctured that spring. None proved more disastrous than Gen. Navarre's faith in the power of air supremacy. The Vietnamese, led by the brilliant general Vo Nguyen Giap (whom the Americans would face a decade later), moved a seemingly limitless supply of men and munitions through the jungle to Dien Bien Phu. It was a mind-bending feat, and it gave the Vietminh high ground above the French base. In a memorable analysis, Ho Chi Minh turned a helmet upside down, pointed to the bottom and said: "That's where the French are." Fingering the helmet's rim, he added, "that's where we are. They will never get out."

Ho's forces held other advantages. China sent the Vietminh food, medicine and heavy weaponry. As a guerrilla force, the Vietminh enjoyed the edge in motivation and in knowledge of terrain. As Mr. Morgan writes: "The French had an air force. The Vietminh had home-field advantage and could count on the support of the rural population."

In the meantime, French blunders multiplied. France's commissioner general for Indochina was "better known for his champagne dinners in Saigon than his military knowledge." As soldiers died waiting for fresh supplies, parachute teams were delayed because they lacked training certificates. Horrors accumulated on the battlefield. Wounded men languished in overcrowded wards; trenches filled with corpses; monsoon rains flooded the French camp. As conditions deteriorated, evacuation became nearly impossible. Mr. Morgan draws a stirring portrait of the French medic Paul Grauwin, who worked in soaked-through, maggot-infested tents handling "an unending procession of blinded eyes, broken jaws, chests blown open and fractured limbs." Certainly courage was not lacking at Dien Bien Phu.



For years, Indochina had been a geopolitical sideshow for the U.S. After World War II, Washington stood with the region's liberation movements—and so, as a gesture of friendship, a small contingent of American paratroopers was dropped into Ho Chi Minh's forward base in July 1945. Mr. Morgan gives a fascinating account of the meeting: The paratroopers are greeted by a banner hailing "our American friends," and a U.S. medic treats Ho for a dangerously high fever. Says Mr. Morgan: "It is entirely possible that the life of the future president of North Vietnam was saved by an American medic."

Of course the early friendship frayed as anticommunism gripped 1950s Washington. No fewer than seven U.S. presidents and would-be presidents appear in Mr. Morgan's book, and their words make compelling reading, given what was to come. As Dien Bien Phu nears collapse, Eisenhower worries about falling dominoes in Southeast Asia but remains steadfast against intervening on France's behalf. "No one could be more bitterly opposed to ever getting the U.S. involved in a hot war in that region than I am." John F. Kennedy, a senator from Masschusetts at the time, is just as firm: "To pour money, matériel and men into the jungles of Indochina without at least a remote prospect of victory would be dangerously futile and self-destructive." Among future commanders in chief, only Richard Nixon stands unabashedly for intervention.

Still, as the French plight worsened, American diplomats searched for ways to help. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles pressed Congress and the British for a muscular response, but Dulles found few takers. "No more Koreas, with the U.S. furnishing 90% of the manpower," vowed Senate Majority Leader William Knowland, a Republican from California. As monsoons turned Dien Bien Phu to muck, diplomacy bogged down in its own way. In the end, the Vietminh laid siege to the French positions, swarming the valley and capturing thousands of prisoners. For France, the catastrophe meant the end of an era, the loss of a jewel in its colonial realm. For Vietnam, it meant partition into North and South. And for the U.S.—though no one knew it then—it meant the seeds had been sown for another Indochina war.

"Valley of Death" draws deeply on documentary evidence from all sides—French and Vietnamese, American and British, Russian and Chinese. Mr. Morgan's chronicle is exhaustive—sometimes overly so. There are nearly 200 pages of buildup before Dien Bien Phu is mentioned. On the diplomatic front, though one marvels at Mr. Morgan's ability to bring the reader into the negotiating rooms, after a while one finds oneself eager to leave.

Much has been made of Dien Bien Phu's lessons—lessons that the U.S. perhaps should have heeded in Vietnam: the tenacity of the country's indigenous forces, their passion and organization, and the difficulties posed by climate and terrain. But the descriptions of battle in "Valley of Death" are instructive for any military endeavor. At its best, the book is a blistering indictment of commanders whose missteps and arrogance condemn young soldiers to terrible fates. Mr. Morgan tells the haunting story of a French colonel who takes his own life after the fall of a key position. A few days later a young officer reflects: "If all those responsible for what's happening decide to kill themselves, it's going to be quite a crowd in Paris as well as Dien Bien Phu."

Mr. Nagorski, a senior producer at ABC News, is the author of "Miracles on the Water: The Heroic Survivors of a World War II U-Boat Attack."

Five Best Books on British Military Deception / *By Nicholas Rankin*

Putting the Lies in 'Allies'

1. 'Blinker' Hall
By David Ramsay
(Spellmount, 2008)

Britain's Machiavellian director of naval intelligence in World War I, Reginald "Blinker" Hall, was a man whose talent made the U.S. ambassador consider him "the one genius that the war has developed." Hall's organization "tapped the air" for German wireless messages and scanned diplomatic cables. The codebreakers' greatest coup came in 1917 with the interception and deciphering of "the Zimmermann telegram," a secret message from Germany to the Mexican government offering money and the return of the American Southwest if the Mexicans would help wage war on the U.S. The furor that ensued after the message's contents were revealed helped impel the U.S. into the war.

2. The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945
By J.C. Masterman
(Yale, 1972)

J.C. Masterman was an Oxford don who, during World War II, chaired the secret Twenty Committee—20 is XX in Roman numerals, but XX is also a "double cross." The group coordinated false information fed to German intelligence through Nazi spies who had been "turned." Masterman's book was the first great, unsanctioned breach in the wall of British wartime secrecy. Some of Masterman's colleagues never spoke to him again for having exposed their work.

3. The Man Who Never Was
By Ewen Montagu
(Lippincott, 1953)

Operation Mincemeat, designed to divert German attention away from the Allies' impending invasion of Sicily in 1943, involved planting false papers on a genuine corpse outfitted to be a British Royal Marine, "Maj. William Martin." The body was dropped in the ocean off the coast of Spain. Mincemeat worked perfectly—the Nazis took the poisoned bait and rushed to bolster their Greek defenses. Lawyer Ewen Montagu produced a genuine wartime thriller.

4. The Deceivers
By Thaddeus Holt
(Scribner, 2004)

This scholarly yet entertaining magnum opus is the definitive account of all the stratagems used by the Allies against the Axis in World War II. The "master of the game" was the enigmatic Britisher Brig. Dudley W. Clarke, and "The Deceivers" follows the development of Clarke's organization. It was during the desert warfare in North Africa that Clarke started using such ruses as dummy vehicles and fake radio traffic to make the enemy think the British were stronger than they were. The culmination of these ideas was the big lie that convinced the German high command in 1944 that the Allied invasion of Europe would come not at Normandy but with an Army Group led by Gen. George S. Patton at Calais.

5. Garbo
By Tomás Harris
(Public Record Office, 2000)

Catalan-born Juan Pujol—the greatest of World War II double agents—was such a brilliant actor that British intelligence gave him the code name Garbo. His exploits were recorded by his handler, Tomás Harris, in an intelligence file that made such riveting reading that it was published in book form. It shows how Pujol and Harris collaborated in creating a network of fictitious subagents throughout Britain to channel bogus information to the enemy. His ultimate coup was playing a key role in persuading the Germans to hold troops ready for the imminent D-Day invasion at Calais. During the war the oblivious Germans gratefully awarded the Iron Cross to Pujol; after the war, he was given the Order of the British Empire (fifth class) and a gratuity that allowed him to retire quietly to Venezuela, where he died in 1988.

Mr. Rankin is the author of "A Genius for Deception: How Cunning Helped the British Win Two World Wars" (2009).

Berlin's Asian stars

German festival celebrates the cinema of the continent next door *By J.S. Marcus*

Berlin International Film Festival (2); Beta Cinema ('Taipei')

Berlin

The Berlin International Film Festival, which ended last week, is one of Europe's leading venues for all that's new in the film world. But this year—its 60th anniversary—the big winners were movies set in Asia, from its Western reaches in the Turkish forests of Anatolia to a village in World War II Japan.

The Golden Bear, the festival's top prize, went to "Bal" ("Honey"), the last of director Semih Kaplanoglu's trilogy set in rural Turkey. "Tuan Yuan" ("Apart Together"), a Chinese film about aging lovers caught in the China-Taiwan divide, received a Silver Bear for best screenplay, and Shinobu Terajima, the star of the Japanese wartime drama, "Caterpillar," won the Silver Bear for best actress.

Meanwhile, over in the festival's Generation section, emphasizing films for young audiences, "Shui Yuet Sun Tau" ("Echoes of the Rainbow"), directed by Hong Kong's Alex Law, won the Crystal Bear for Best Film.

Traditionally regarded as more adventuresome than its rival European festivals in Cannes and Venice, the Berlin Film Festival has in previous decades awarded the Golden Bear to such maverick directors as German Rainer Werner Fassbinder and American John Cassavetes. And as seen by its roster of lesser-known prizewinners this year, that spirit still seems to linger. Even so, the buzz for this year's main section (called Competition) seemed reserved for the world premieres of two prestigious commercial films—"Shutter Island" and "The Ghost Writer," a pair of thrillers directed, respectively, by Martin Scorsese and Roman Polanski. Mr. Polanski, who is under house arrest in Switzerland and could not attend the festival, won a Silver Bear for best director.

The red carpet at the Berlinale Palast, the festival's main venue, was a parade of A-list luminaries like Mr. Scorsese and Ben Stiller, making their way to world premieres of their latest films.

For festival critics and adventurous audiences, this commercial bent was a disappointment. But fortunately there was the alternative section, called the Forum, where many of the festival's best and most unusual films were shown, getting their international premieres in the anonymous, red-carpet-free cineplexes where most of the festival actually takes place.

"We are here to prove," says Christoph Terhechte, head of the Forum section, "that there is an interested audience for independent films that don't just have entertainment value."

Forum audiences were captivated by two debut films from Asian directors. "Yi Yè Tái Bei" ("Au Revoir Taipei") is a near-perfect Taiwanese feature directed by 31-year-old Chinese-American Arvin Chen. It expertly brings together an eclectic range of influences, from the humanistic Taiwanese films of Edward Yang to the French New Wave of the 1950s and '60s. "Na-neun gon-kyeong-e cheo-haet-da!" ("I'm in Trouble!") is a subtle, beautifully realized comedy by South Korean director So Sang-Min. It also shows a French New Wave influence—surprisingly, of Eric Rohmer, the master of the long shot, who died earlier this year at age 89.

There was a time in Berlin when the atmosphere at the Competition section wouldn't have been so far apart from the Forum, says German director Wim Wenders. Mr. Wenders, who has participated in both the Forum and the main competition in previous years, attended this year's Forum as the executive producer of "Au Revoir Taipei."

"The fact that the Forum and the Competition are so far apart now reflects the reality of our film landscape," says Mr. Wenders. "The commercial blockbuster movie is really separated by a big gap from the mass of fantastic films that don't really have access to cinemas anymore. For many of them, the Forum is the only chance to get seen and maybe leap up into a different category."

"Au Revoir Taipei," scheduled for an April release in Taiwan, followed by releases in Singapore and Malaysia, won this year's Netpac Prize, awarded by the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema to the best Asian film in the Forum section.

Messrs. Chen and So depict the 20-somethings of contemporary Asian societies, which, in Mr. Chen's words, are full of "people who don't know what they want." His film's Taipei, he says, is "a city where there are no bad guys"—a city lit by TV sets, convenience-store neon, and floating lanterns. "Any dumb guy and girl can fall in love" there, says the U.S. native, who relocated to Taiwan after film school in Los Angeles.

Mr. Chen's Seoul, by contrast, is a city of despair and an almost neurotic fear of failure. "I'm in Trouble!" tells the story of slacker poet Sun-Woo, stuck on the fringes of a career-driven society. Sun-Woo—who consistently, and usually drunkenly, disappoints his upstanding girlfriend, Yuma—is hilarious, and maddening, and ultimately very human. Each and every one of his moral failings is chronicled with Rohmer-like precision by Mr. So.

"Privately I admire someone like the lawyer," says Mr. So, speaking of a minor character who briefly appears toward the end of the movie—a hard worker who makes a sharp contrast with the feckless Sun-Woo. "I want to be a person like him, but I more resemble someone like Sun-Woo."

In recent years, the Forum has tended to highlight a particular Asian country, says Mr. Terhechte; mini-festivals this past decade have focused on Korean, Malaysian, and Filipino films. But he describes this year's Forum offerings as "pan-Asian" and thinks the phenomenon is indicative of the entire festival.

The Competition section opened and closed with Asian films—"Alone Together" and "Otouto" ("About Her Brother"), respectively. The latter, a heartbreaking story of doomed siblings, was one of two films from Japanese director Yoji Yamada to screen at the festival. His latest, the more whimsical "Kyoto Uzumasa Monogatari" ("Kyoto Story")—the tale of a 20-something Kyoto librarian pursued by two men—was included in the Forum. Mr. Yamada, whose directing career goes back more than 40 years, also received the festival's honorary award for special achievement, the Berlinale Camera.

J.S. Marcus is a writer based in Berlin.

Clockwise from top, three films from Asia that made a splash in Berlin: China's 'Apart Together'; Hong Kong's 'Echoes of the Rainbow'; Taiwan's 'Au Revoir Taipei'

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Arbitrage

Ferrari Rosso motorcycle helmet

Ferrari

City	Currency	US$
Hong Kong	HK$1,960	$252
London	£180	$278
Rome	€249	$339
New York		$360
Tokyo	¥37,030	$404
Frankfurt	€299	$407
Brussels	€320	$436
Paris	€332	$452

Prices, including taxes, converted to the nearest U.S. dollar